

Hayti, a Land Where Every Prospect Pleases; And Man, If Not Vile, Is Poor and Ignorant



By Wilbur Forrest

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Hayti.

THE man who complained of being affected by the "weather" after sitting through dinner between a man from California and a man from Florida might continue his fancied indisposition in Hayti.

Here may be found numerous protagonists of Haytian weather and scenery. Warm winter days, if anything too warm at noontime; exquisite tropical sunrises and sunsets, mother-of-pearl cloud effects, opalescent blue waters of the Caribbean, a tropic valley verdure that beggars description—they are here.

Port-au-Prince, the metropolis of Hayti, is in itself a verdant garden picture in an extraordinary setting. Towering hills, rising perhaps three thousand feet, horseshoe the city. Their uneven crests seem constantly supporting fluffy cumulus clouds—silver lined in the sunlight—or bathed in more sombre plateau-like mists. Singularly, the greenest and most extravagant gifts of nature clothe the precipitate slopes on one side, while on the others, a few miles away, sinister rock ledges reflect their bareness in the bright sun.

Water Blue as the Sky

At the mouth of the horseshoe lie the blue waters of the Caribbean drinking even deeper blue than ordinary from the skies. And here, hidden within the circle, is the most peopled little valley in Hayti, three-fourths hidden under tropical foliage of every description.

There are both weather and scenery in Hayti to draw the notice of either the Californian or the Floridian and even to make envious the seashored New Yorker.

From the horseshoe hillside you may look down to see in clearest relief of all against the green the whitened walls of Hayti's national palace and the two-towered white cathedral. Elsewhere, half hidden behind, that recall the chateau-dotted Loire region in France, peep from beneath growths of coconut palms, oranges, bananas, mangoes, alligator pears and other bequests of the Almighty.

On a rise just back of the city being the bay there is an incongruity in the picture. Progress has interrupted the skyline with two great aerial wireless towers which talk United States Navy business with Arlington, Va., by day and by night. Snuggling under them is an ancient stone fortress watching over the city, a relic of the days when Frenchmen ruled slave plantations of Louis XIV's richest colonial possession.

The blue harbor of Hayti's capital is not the busy waterstead that five years of American civil and military occupation in Hayti have made it. As I write the weekly steamer is a dot on the horizon, skirting Gonaïves Island, twenty miles away, on its route from Colon to New York. Aside from a few picturesque little fishing craft playing about here and there and the Haytian navy—two small ships—lying rusty and helpless to one side, a United States government yacht has the bay all to her graceful self. The yacht brought Admirals Mayo and Oliver and General Nivelle here many days ago to determine what has been the matter with five years of marine rule in Hayti.

Plenty of Possibilities

The general progress of this little West Indian Republic is reflected by the empty harbor. It is a land with many possibilities which turbulent history and a certain amount of characteristic tropical lassitude have handicapped since the French were driven from its shores after they had made it a storehouse for the home country. Along came United States marines five years ago, followed by treaty officials from the State Department. A half decade has elapsed, but the most unbiased observer here will agree that Hayti still has little more in a material way than her possibilities.

Christopher Columbus wrote his first impressions of the Island of Hayti in 1493, being a letter to Raphael Sanchez, "treasurer to Ferdinand and Isabella." Columbus named this island "Española," and said of it:

"There are lofty mountains of very great size and beauty, vast

SCENE in Gonaïves, a village in Hayti

plains, groves and very fruitful fields, admirably adapted for tillage, pasture and habitation. The convenience and excellence of the harbors in this island, and the abundance of rivers, so indispensable to the health of man, surpass anything that would be believed by one who had not seen it. The trees, herbage and fruits of Española are different from those of Juana (Cuba), and, moreover, it abounds in various kinds of spices, gold and other metals. The inhabitants of both sexes in this island go always naked as they were born, with the exception of some of the women, who use the covering of a leaf, or small bough, or an apron of cotton, which they prepare for that purpose."

Natives Were Simple

Speaking of the Indians whom he found here, Columbus commented on their extreme simplicity, "bartering like idiots cotton and gold for fragments of bows, glasses, bottles and jars." He added that they practiced no kind of idolatry and, "as far as I have learned, every man throughout these islands is united to one wife, except chiefs."

Speaking of all the West Indian islands which he had discovered, Columbus said of Hayti, in another letter to Louis de Santangel:

"Yet the preference must be given to Española on account of the mines of gold which it possesses and the facilities it offers for trade with continents and countries this side and beyond that of the Great Can, which traffic will be great and profitable."

Hayti is, to-day not in that state of progress which Columbus dreamed for it. I can look as this is being written down onto the empty bay and the empty wharf—the only wharf in Hayti—where the coming of a steamship is more of an occasion than a routine event. I have seen here old wood prints of the bay at Cape Hayti to the north well over a century ago, the French trade center. It is congested with ships and cargo carriers waiting for the

off with her under his very nose and did not even utter a protest? Girls liked a strong man. For an instance a flicker of the right spirit burned in Lancelot's mind. He stopped. He would follow her and find her and snatch her from the society of this damned press agent and . . . The flicker died away. How could he find her? He couldn't go round dragging all the restaurants in the city.

He ended his evening by taking a solitary coffee and wheat cakes at an all-night lunch counter. Then he went back to the station and had to wait two hours for a train.

The week dragged its weary length along. Saturday came at last, and Lancelot went to bed with the first gleam of happiness that had illuminated his gray existence since the Monday. To-morrow he would see May once more in her own little flat, where he had never felt anything but at home.

Voices came to him through the front door as he stood there next day, breathing quickly with anticipation mingled with the effort of running up four flights of stairs. They had the effect of causing an immediate depression of his exalted mood. He had counted on May being alone. His mood changed to an unwelcome irritation. Were these meetings always to go wrong?

And then the door opened. It was opened by Mr. Fletcher.

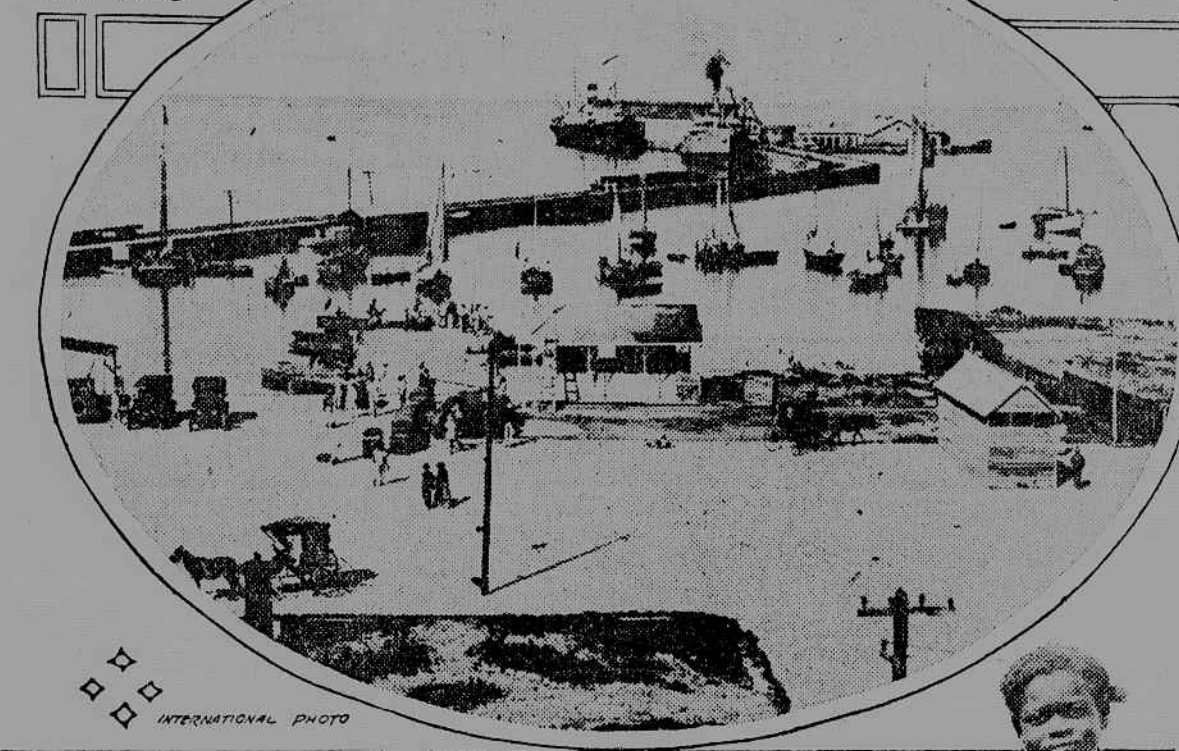
"Hullo!" said Mr. Fletcher. The press agent was a man of commanding appearance. He was broad and heavily built and he stood four inches above Lancelot. But what dominated Lancelot was the man's self-satisfaction, his air of being entirely certain of himself. It seemed to expand him. Lancelot, as he gazed upon him, felt obscure and insignificant.

"Is . . . Is Miss Gleason in?" he asked.

"Yes. Want to see her?"

What Lancelot would have liked

Photo Service



THE ONCE crowded harbor of Port-au-Prince is now almost deserted.

rich products which made it famous in France. Now it is almost deserted.

Indians All Gone

The Indians that Columbus found here in the fifteenth century have disappeared as completely as the wild pigeons of America. Enslaved by the Spanish and Portuguese and swept by scourge, they died like flies. Here to-day are the negroes which the Spanish and Portuguese, and latterly the French, imported from Africa as slaves to work the fruitful fields.

Columbus found about two million Indians in the whole Island of Hayti, comprising what are now the Republics of Hayti and Santo Domingo combined. To-day there are two million negroes in the Republic of Hayti alone. Led by Toussaint, P. Overture and Dessalines, they won their independence in 1804, and kept it in a turbulent fashion until it was perhaps reduced to semi-independence by the landing of United States marines on the night five

years ago when a maddened mob dragged Guillaume Sam from the French Legation and cut off their ill-advised President's head.

The Indians who Columbus praised for their monogamous attributes and their lack of idolatrous traits of worship were, perhaps, a trifle more advanced in 1492 than the bulk of Hayti's populace of the present day. Here to-day is the voodoo worship, partly suppressed by the American occupation, but still, in its guarded way, a relic of Wanyikl rites in the Congo. Armed strife has taken from Hayti's manhood its natural

percentage of males and informal polygamy is a natural result. These Ethiopian Haytians would also be better satisfied with the same mode of dress employed by the Indians of Columbus's day. The peoninies one sees everywhere are generally satisfied to ape the Indian mode, while the elders wear whatever is most convenient. Youths of uncertain ages and unquestionable nakedness come out in small canoes to the steamers to dive for pennies. Ashore, you find their brothers calmly wearing the shirt, which flaps around dangerously in the Caribbean

breeces. The elders are clad more according to circumstance and comfort. It is doubtless correct to say that not one flour sack or cement sack that finds its way here, once

Stone Age. Emotions which civilization had done its best to crush out of them were alive again, raw and tingling.

"Larry!" cried May. So might a proud young wife have spoken to her mate as he emerged triumphant from a brisk three-rounds with a saber-toothed tiger or a lively turn-up with the local mammoth.

"Larry!" Lancelot spoke no word. His thoughts at the moment were vague and chaotic, but he realized dimly that she had passed from his life. He felt tenderly the shapeless swelling which in some way or other had contrived to attach itself to the side of his head. Then he walked quickly out of the room.

"Larry!" Mr. Fletcher looked up from the floor. His thoughts, also, were chaotic, but he had collected them sufficiently to enable him to remember that he had been attacked by a mob of assassins and had put up a great battle.

"Did I win?" he inquired.

He found himself addressing emptiness. May had gone. She had caught Lancelot up on the first landing and was babbling in his arms.

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BARBER SHOP

and underneath—

L. Purvis, Prop.



A GROUP of Haytian children. It might have been taken anywhere in Dixie so far as appearances go.

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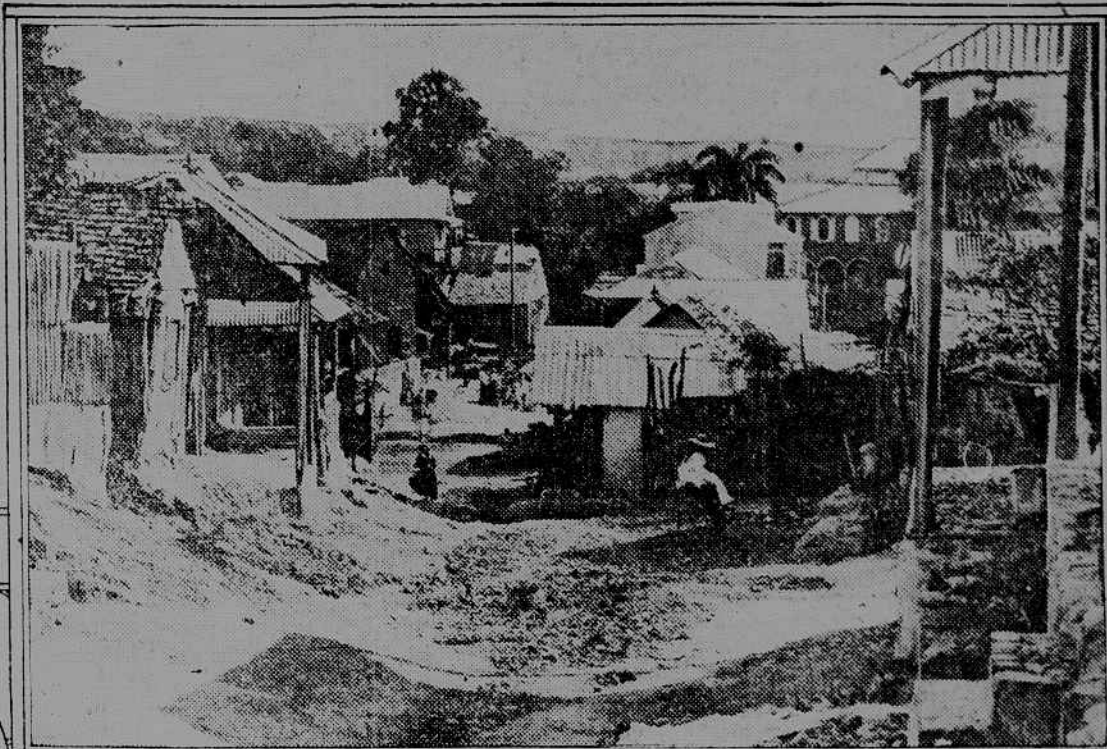
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STREET SCENE in Port-au-Prince, the metropolis of Hayti

devoid of contents, escapes being threaded into unshapen garments that will be worn until they almost cease to exist.

Like Joseph's Coat

A certain brand of flour which is much advertised is a popular one here, judging from the opportunity to read its phrase on wrappers, shirts or nether garments badly concealing types of Haytian nakedness. I have seen cement sacks doing full duty for ebony-skinned Haytian girls, holes carved out for the head and arms. One sees the ultimate of raggedness alongside the sartorial wonders of the world.

Every year Haytian workmen are enticed by labor agents to Cuba, where they make good money cutting sugar cane. The ships that take them over in tatters bring them back, often with glaring white duck suits, with a gold tooth or two, a stiff straw hat, a pair of American shoes and a silver-headed "cocoanuck" cane and usually a trunk. Customs inspectors seldom find anything in the trunk. It is part of the camouflage.

It would, of course, be unjust to speak of all Haytians as nondescript ragamuffins supporting modesty with the least resistance. Three per cent of the populace, whose lighter color denotes their French or foreign blood, are the most radical opposites of the rank and file. Highly educated, always immaculately garbed and speaking the most perfect French, they represent all the culture of the otherwise Black Republic. But for the rank and file there seems to be little in store except the bare existence which they die out, aided by bountiful nature and a wage,

when they work, that would make an American ditch-digger become a raving maniac.

The black earns from 20 to 30 cents a day in his own land. Americans here who have had a chance to compare the American workman at \$3 a day with the Haytian toiler at 30 cents declare there is not much difference. The black lightermen who come out to the ships to unload cargo—stripped to the waist—appear to be wonderful specimens of manhood. The perspiration-bathed muscles stand out, glistening in the sunlight, but a diet mainly of fruit and too little of the vitamin-giving foods from childhood robs them of the strength which they only appear to possess.

Few Capable of Citizenship

I have met Americans here who contend that the Haytian worker will never give over 20 or 30 cents' worth of labor a day. Experiments, however, seem to disprove this claim. At the present stage of development, the Haytian is probably incapable of efficient citizenship as known in more enlightened republics. There is doubt whether he has ever had any particular acquaintance with the ballot. Hayti has its small percentage of intellectual politicians who have operated the government and its exchequer none too well, judging by history, since the words "L'Union fait la force" were placed on the national coat-of-arms along with a cap of liberty and a palm tree, denoting a free nation indivisible.

With all his squalor, poverty and illiteracy the "peon" Haytian is a kindly individual whose eyes generally denote a certain sorrow and invoke sympathy if one is inclined to sentimentalize. Recently the wife of a high marine officer, imbued with noble philanthropy and sympathetic interest in the downtrodden mass, remarked to a male friend of long residence here, through of less sentimental tendencies:

Sorrows Old or New

"Poor things, you can see the sorrow of generations in their eyes."

"You are mistaken," remarked the friend; "the sorrow you see in their eyes is sorrow because they were not able to do their next-door neighbor in a trade this morning."

The trade referred to is not generally in the sense of high commerce. The lower caste Haytian is not a merchant except in the smallest way. The great marketplaces are filled with them every day, bartering or selling empty five-gallon gasoline cans, empty bottles, tiny portions of corn and other eatables, bananas, plantains, oranges and hundreds of other staples and fruits. Seldom a single deal exceeds five or ten cents. The goods in an entire market place, covering two acres or more and crowded with petty commercials, could possibly be bought any day for \$100 in American money.

The Haytian "dollar" is called a gourd and is divisible into 100 units.

The Haytian mass is content to live in its little caille—a cross between a Congo hut and the negro shanties of our South—surrounded by innumerable children, and think about to-day-to-morrow will take care of itself. Properly understood and fed up, he will perhaps some day be uplifted, and the fertile fields over which Columbus enthused in 1492 will some day bloom in even cultivated rows, and the harbor will again be filled with ships that carry commerce over the seas.

But all this is so obviously a white man's job—from the managerial point of view—that one finds little argument on the subject even here in Hayti.

Hayti has its climate, its fertile fields and its beautiful scenery to-day—and peace. It needs sane, clear, horse sense, and with the white man cooperation that made Cuba and other American dependencies bloom.

Hayti needs its General Wood.

The Golden Flaw----By P. G. Wodehouse

(Continued from preceding page)

to reply was, "Of course I want to see her, damn your eyes, and what the devil are you doing here, anyway?" But the magnetism of the other was upon him like a spell.

"Yes," he said. "Come in."

Lancelot followed him humbly into the sitting room.

"Some one to see you, May," said the press agent.

Beyond his intervening bulk Lancelot could perceive a blue serge dress. His heart was beating wildly. He squeezed past Mr. Fletcher. And then he stopped dead.

"Hello, Larry!"

Lancelot did not speak. A helpless, nightmare feeling had overcome him. . . . The voice was the voice of May. The face was May's face. But the hair. . . .

GONE was the great rolling black wave. . . . Gone was the soft, brooding sound. . . . Gone the moonless night, the water under the stars. . . . Piled in an affected mass upon her head, gleaming and golden, her hair smote upon his vision and froze him in his tracks. She had dyed it yellow!

May smiled a little nervously.

"How do you like it?" she said.

Lancelot found no words.

"It was Mr. Fletcher's idea," went on May. "He said managers would always rather engage blond girls."

Mr. Fletcher surveyed his handiwork with complacency.

"Sure," he said. "Black hair don't get you anywhere. Blondes are all the thing these days."

He stepped back abruptly. "Say! What the hell!"

Lancelot had cracked. Push a rabbit too far and he will turn on a bulldog. Persecute a sheep beyond the limit which nature has set for its endurance and it will attack a

lion. All his life Lancelot had bowed meekly before the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune; all his life he had accepted affronts as his birthright. But now the breaking point had been reached. He was looking on the world—and particularly Mr. Fletcher—through a mist of red. That wonderful hair of May's had held him a slave to her every whim. But now . . . He uttered a sound that was half sob, half snarl, and flung himself on the press agent.

"What the hell!" said Mr. Fletcher.

Mr. Fletcher was no poltroon. He was a man who kept up his end in the world. But hitherto he had never been called upon to do it physically, and he had permitted himself to become a trifle soft. He recoiled before Lancelot's onslaught, tripped over a stool and collapsed on the sofa.

"Get up!" said Lancelot through his teeth, and stood breathing heavily.

The press agent got up. The first shock of surprise over, he was prepared to enter more fully into this matter. The unexpectedness of Lancelot's attack had put him at a disadvantage in the opening stages of the campaign, but he had now adjusted his mind to the business in hand. His blood was up. He had no notion why he was being assaulted by a perfect stranger, but his forehead was tingling where Lancelot had struck it, and his favorite tie, torn from its moorings by Lancelot's clutching hands, was practically a total loss, and he was in the mood to seek reparation for these outrages.

May stood rigid, a paralyzed spectator of the proceedings. At the beginning she had started forward and laid a hand on Lancelot's arm, but he had shaken it off with an energy so savage and unexpected that she had shrunk back, terrified, against the wall; and she remained there now because it seemed the only place in

the room which was not in the track of the storm.

MEANWHILE Lancelot and Mr. Fletcher fought spaciouly all over the place.

There are few things which your red blooded writer enjoys describing more than a fight. But it has to be the right sort of fight, with seconds and rounds and may-the-best-man-win and all that sort of thing. An untidy brawl like this gives him no chance. There is no finesse about it. As far as Lancelot and Mr. Fletcher were concerned, the Queensberry rules might never have been written. Mr. Fletcher tore Lancelot's collar off and Lancelot hit Mr. Fletcher with a volume of love poetry which was lying convenient to his hand on a small table. Mr. Fletcher knocked Lancelot against the small table and hit Mr. Fletcher with that. In fact, to avoid going into wearisome detail, he hit Mr. Fletcher with practically everything in the room except May, who dodged; the sofa, which was too heavy to lift; the bookcase, which was fastened to the wall, and the picture of "September Morn," which hung too high to be reached. It was a well directed blow with a bronze flower bowl which settled the issue. It took Mr. Fletcher squarely on the head and he subsided on the floor.

"Have you had enough?" demanded Lancelot fiercely.

Mr. Fletcher did not reply, for his interest in the proceedings had evaporated entirely. He sat on the floor and panted.

Lancelot surveyed May grimly. He was a repellent object. One of his eyes was closed, the other stared horribly. His lip was cut and the blood dripped slowly down his chin. Yet, awful as was his aspect, May gazed upon him with a devotion which his normal appearance had never aroused in her. The centuries had slipped away from these simple people and they were back in the

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to notice particularly is her hair. It is dark hair. And yet dark is such a feeble word. It is like a great rolling black wave. It is like a soft, brooding cloud. If you are peevish you will probably compare it in your mind to a moonless night or water under the stars. It was cut quite short, like a boy's, when the Purvises arrived here after the honeymoon, for, as everybody knows, Mrs. Purvis had a fever or something of that sort and had to have it clipped. But it has regained all its old length and luxuriance now.

L. Purvis, proprietor, is finishing with his customer. With his gleaming razor he removes a patch of unclaimed jungle which still lingers on the left cheek and, stepping back, surveys his handiwork with silent satisfaction. He now produces a steaming towel from nowhere and dumps it on the customer's face, kneads it for a while, whisks it off, applies witch hazel and finally jabs the face with a second towel.

"Face massage, sir?"

"No!"

"Better have a face massage, sir?"

"No!"

"Very good for the skin. Prevents it getting wrinkled."

"When I was at the Hotel Cosmopolis, in New York, all the gentlemen used to take a face massage."

"That so?"

"Very restful and soothing, sir."

"Yes? Well, all right. Gimme a face massage."

The woman with the wonderful hair turns to you apologetically.

"I'm afraid you will have to wait just a little longer, sir. Both the assistants are out at their lunch."

You settle down to your newspaper. It is not unpleasant to wait, for there is an atmosphere of homey contentment about this barber shop. Moreover, the proprietor has impressed you. He knows his job and

is obviously a man of determination and character.

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